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December 9, 2003

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D. 
Director and Chief Medical Officer

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. 
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HOUSING INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT
AND RATING PROCEDURES**

On November 25, 2003, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Antonovch, which instructed the Auditor-Controller to work with the Director of Health Services to conduct a full investigation into the Department of Health Services (DHS) Housing Inspection and Enforcement Program and rating procedures. In addition, the Director of Health Services was instructed to evaluate a system that allows public access to inspection reports and posted letter grades. This is to provide you with a status report on these efforts.

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

Since the November 25, 2003 motion, the Auditor-Controller (AC) met with Environmental Health (EH) Staff on December 2 and December 4, 2003. At these meetings, the following activities took place:

- EH provided copies of Environmental Health's Housing policies to the AC.
- EH provided an overview of the Environmental Health organizational structure and a detailed review of the four housing components within EH.
- EH provided a listing of key managers and supervisors involved in Housing so AC could conduct interviews with these individuals. AC has initiated individual interviews with EH key staff.

AC held a meeting with key EH Management Information System (EHMIS) staff to review the EH Housing system records and explain the EHMIS housing data and the various reports and tracking tools available to supervisors and management. At this meeting, a copy of the EHMIS Guide to Reports was provided to AC. Additionally, copies of the EH Daily Activity Report and the Housing Official Inspection Report were provided, along with an explanation on how these documents are utilized to develop the basic information for the EH Housing Data System. Also provided were several specialized reports from the EHMIS database.

DATA ACCESS

At the Board's direction, EH Department staff, created a search engine to enable internet access to the housing records, similar to our Food Program data base. This information, which provides public access to the past two years of current inspection data and inspection scores, also identifies violations for all multiple family dwellings and condominiums inspected by EH staff. This system provides the public with a variety of search capabilities, ranging from housing information for a single location to all the housing in a zip code or city geographic area for a specific date or period of time.

The district office responsible for the particular housing site, including address and phone number, is also noted as the inspection data is displayed. This enables the public to call for clarification if they have any questions. Additionally, a chart is available to provide inspection dates, violation categories, the severity for each violation, and the inspection score. A description of severity for each violation listed is linked to another web page.

Finally, we have expanded the public's access to EH and installed an online complaint form by which the public may register a complaint over the Internet. This system could be utilized for housing or any other type of facility EH regulates. This system is checked daily and forwarded to the appropriate EH unit for investigation and response. In addition, the EH 24-hour Hot Line, (888) 700-9995, is available to the public. This line is also monitored daily and the calls are referred to the appropriate unit for action.

We are reviewing the issues of letter grades and additional posting requirements and will include a further update when we report to the Board on January 13, 2004 concerning the Knabe/Burke motion on the housing program.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let either of us know.

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c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller